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**HINTS**  
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**IMPROVED AND SELF-PAYING SYSTEM**  
**OF**  
**NATIONAL EDUCATION,**  
**SUGGESTED FROM THE**  
**WORKING OF A VILLAGE SCHOOL IN HAMPSHIRE.**  
**WITH**  
**OBSERVATIONS, FROM PERSONAL INSPECTION,**  
**ON THE**  
**IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.**

**BY THE**  
**REV. RICHARD DAWES, A.M.**

**LONDON:**  
**GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,**  
**PATERNOSTER ROW.**  
**1847.**

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KING'S SOMBORNE

NATIONAL SCHOOL.

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THE success of the National School of this village, and the mode of instruction adopted in it, having been such as to attract considerable attention, I am induced, in compliance with a wish repeatedly expressed by the Rev. Mr. Allen, her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, to submit an account of it to the public, under a hope that, in so doing, I am giving some assistance to those who have the same object in view as myself,—the establishing an efficient system of education in their own parishes.

There is no way of promoting an object of a practical kind, better than by explaining plans of working it out, which have been found by experience to be successful, as it must be admitted that what has been done in one case, may, under similar circumstances, be done in another.

Dr. Hook says, we live in an age when the question is, *not whether*, but *how*, the people are to be educated.

To the question, *how* the people are to be educated,



I conceive the plan adopted here, and now entering on its fifth year, to be a successful and practical answer, so far as regards my own parish, and that at no great expense to the State ; how far this answer may be a general one, and apply to other districts, those who read will judge for themselves, but I can see no difficulty, wherever the trial is fairly made.

It has always appeared to me, that a system of National Education embracing the wants of the labouring classes, and those immediately connected with them, uniting both, might be established on something like a self-paying principle, and in this way a system, so far as education is concerned, better in its kind, and having a much stronger hold on the affections of the people of all classes, might be brought about, and with a greater probability of permanent success, than on any other plan of a less pretending kind, which confines itself merely to the education of the poor ; but in order to effect this, it is necessary that the educational acquirements to be had at our schools, should be sufficient for all the wants of industrial life, and bearing upon their every-day occupations ; for instance, in the rural districts, equal to all that is wanted by the occupying class of farmers, and such trades as are connected with the occupation of land, and although, in order to accomplish this, there are prejudices to be overcome, yet, from my own experience here, I know it can be effected.

In this way, and keeping in view the principle of uniting the education of the children of the labourer with those of his employer, I have endeavoured to supply the educational wants of my own parish, and, with the hope of inducing others to attempt the same, I venture to publish the result of the experiment.

That there is something of unwillingness, even amongst many of the educated classes, to extend secular education among the poor, there can be no doubt ; but by raising the standard of secular acquirements, we should at the same time, by proper attention, promote the blessing of a sound scriptural education, in a much higher degree than on any system which aims at so small an amount of knowledge as that which is to be acquired in the great majority of our National Schools.

Of this unwillingness I had an instance, about the time of my commencing this school. Being present in a party where the education of the labouring classes was the subject of conversation, and a particular school being mentioned, in which the clergyman of the parish took great interest, one of the party very significantly observed, "Poor man, he is teaching the children geography!" and this, in a way as if the man was much to be pitied who could think of such a thing, and as I saw that the feeling of those present went with the speaker, it required an effort of courage on

my part, to avow that I intended doing the same, *and more.*

Such feelings are by no means uncommon, we hear less of them now than a few years ago, because the tide of education is against them.

Improved education for the labourer is not generally popular with the farmer. One wants to know if it will make a boy plough a straighter furrow ; another quaintly asks, if it will make his turnips grow (he knows hard work will) : and I actually know a case, where the farmers of a parish turned against the clergyman's plan, because he proposed teaching geography ; saying, " they would not have the labourers' toes treading on their heels : " such prejudices are fast giving way, and will in a little time give no trouble.

A common complaint among the middle classes of agricultural life, is the expense of education ; but, as soon as it is found that a better one is to be had at our National Schools, than they are in the habit of giving their own children, and at a much less cost, they will readily embrace the opportunity of sending them, and, in this way, not only benefit themselves, but indirectly assist in educating the children of those around them, and have the satisfaction of seeing that moral improvement among the labouring classes which in any other way it would be vain to expect. The classes above the labourer would always have the advantage of being able to send their children to

school to a greater age, and thus they would come out into the world, in point of education, in advance of those who in the social chain stand below them. In the school here, there is no difference whatever, either in the instruction or in the treatment of the children, arising from one class paying more than another ; everything works and harmonizes well, on the principle, of those who are able to do so, sending their children for a longer period.

With respect to the standard of acquirements to be had at most of our National Schools, all seem to agree that it is far below what it ought to be, and that this is the case, no one of any experience can doubt.

I have myself been in some (and there are many of a like kind), where the more advanced children did not know whether the months of July and August were summer or winter months, and could not answer many other questions equally simple.

There are at present in the school here, three brothers lately come, who walk every day a distance of four miles, the eldest of them fourteen years of age, fine healthy lads, so far as the building up of the animal is concerned, and children of parents well able to pay for their education ; these children have been sent to a village school more than three years, and actually cannot read fluently words of one syllable, and in every other respect equally ignorant ; and this in no way owing to deficiency on the part of the children

themselves. How can parents be expected to take any interest in schools where such are the results ?

This is owing, in a great measure, to the total unfitness of the schoolmaster ; and, in one instance of a school which I visited, and on the building of which a great deal of money had been spent, making some observations to the master about a stove which was in it, he replied, " I likes he very well : " and his mode of expressing himself, on all other subjects, was equally incorrect.

From the daily working of this school, and from every observation which I can make, as to the interest which parents take in it, from the tendency which is shown on the part of those immediately above the labouring class, and who have hitherto never dreamt of schools of this kind, as places of education for their own children, but who now show a most lively interest in doing so, I should say, rather than aim at a system of state education of the labouring classes, apart from that of the class immediately above them, aim at a system of good practical and industrial education, bearing upon the wants of both, for, up to a certain point, the wants both of the labouring class and the immediate employer of labour are the same ; let the labourer feel that by his own industry a good education for his children is within his power, and he will not only take the greater interest in it, but much greater respectability attaches to himself by his being made the instrument

through which it is to be had ; let the upper class experience the benefits to their own children from such schools, a benefit which they will not be slow to understand, and one which their children's increasing intelligence will very soon prove to them, that *they* are the party most deeply interested in the success of schools of this kind : do this, and there will be no difficulty in the maintenance of them.

One great objection to a plan of educating the poor, as a class entirely apart from their fellow-men, is, that it assumes them to be paupers as to one of the most important wants of life ; for certainly, next to food, clothing, and shelter, education is the most important. Why should all the world preach, and talk, and declaim against pauperism, and then show, by the plans which they adopt, that in respect to education it must be assumed as a principle that the whole of the labouring classes are paupers ? why disconnect these adjoining and important links in the social chain—the very mainstay and support of the whole fabric—when they might be united by a much stronger tie than any which holds them together at present ; that of an education in common ? their wants being alike in this respect, and the system of education in the class of life immediately above the labourer is quite as defective, and a better system quite as much wanted as for the labouring class : and the present would appear to be a favorable time,

when a system uniting the two might be attempted with success.

No doubt many jarring elements between these two classes would give way, and the feelings between them be much softened and subdued, by an united education which is sound and practically good; "producing a sympathy between the employer and the employed, a sense of their mutual dependence and mutual duties, a pleasure in the recognition of each other's joys, and reciprocal condolence in those sorrows which fall to the lot of every rank."

The following passage, from the 'Records of Creation,' by Dr. Sumner, the present Bishop of Chester, is so much to the purpose, and carries so much greater weight with it than anything which I could say, both as to the benefits arising from educating the poor, and making them as far as possible the instruments through which it is to be done, that I cannot but quote it:—  
 "Of all obstacles to improvement ignorance is the most formidable, because the only true secret of assisting the poor is by making them agents in bettering their own condition, and to supply them, not with a temporary stimulus, but with a permanent energy. As fast as the standard of intelligence is raised the poor become more and more able to co-operate in any plan proposed for their advantage, and more likely to listen to any reasonable suggestion, and more able to understand,

and therefore more willing to pursue it. Hence it follows, that when gross ignorance is once removed, and right principles are introduced, a great advantage has been already gained against squalid poverty. Many avenues to an improved condition are opened to one whose faculties are enlarged and exercised ; he sees his own interest more clearly, he pursues it more steadily, and he does not study immediate gratification at the expense of bitter and late repentance, or mortgage the labour of his future life without an adequate return. Indigence, therefore, will rarely be found in company with good education."

My own experience here strongly confirms the truth of these sentiments, and I invariably find that those parents (of whom there are many) who do not avail themselves of the school, are not those who have the lowest wages, or earn the least money, but they are the most ignorant, and their habits of life are of so low and degraded a nature, that they are not only indifferent to the welfare and moral conduct of their own children, but are perfectly regardless of the good opinion of those around them : many of them, such as are living in crowded cottages, and, from the force of habit and bad management, can make no effort to keep their children decently clean ; and, in fact, their standard of moral feeling is so low, whether arising out of their physical condition, I do not know, as to make them appear to have little beyond the animal instinct of feeding their



young, so as to keep the body alive, and have not the slightest notion of anything which is not of a gross and sensual nature.

I would have it inculcated by every father in his family, by every schoolmaster in his school, by every clergyman in his parish, that the man who *needlessly* throws himself for support on the industry of others, lowers himself in the scale of human beings, and in some respects partakes of the character of a dishonest man ; does not act up to the precepts of Christianity which he professes, and that the strong feeling of the labouring class, which prevails more particularly in the south of England, of " Why spare the parish ? " and is encouraged by the strangely mistaken principles on which the farmers act, not only has a tendency in every possible way to lower their condition, by interfering with the price of labour, and thus lowering their standard of social comforts, by totally destroying every feeling of self-respect and of manly independence ; and that in past times it had almost destroyed the whole social system to which they belong, and may do so again if not guarded against, by a system of education of the lower classes, by teaching them more of forethought in what concerns their own domestic affairs, and giving them a greater insight as to how all this bears upon the well-being, not only of their own class, but of the country to which they belong.

In saying this of the labouring class I do not throw

the blame upon them, as regards the past, far from it ; I think much greater blame attaches itself to the classes above them, who, without having the excuse of want of education, have not paid that attention to their condition, physical and moral, which it was their duty to do.

Nor would I less press upon the attention of the rising generation, those of them likely to be the future employers of labour, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire ;" that the wages of the industrious labourer, in a healthy state of society, ought to be equal to all the decent wants and respectabilities of his station in life ; and although political economy may say the state of the labour market is not regulated by considerations of this kind, yet, youth trained up in these ideas, and, with kindly feelings arising out of them, impressed in early life, will not afterwards be able to shake them off at the suggestions of avarice ; but will be content to think, that such a portion of the value of a commodity as is equal to all his proper wants belongs to the producer, who has the first claim, and that the merchant, the landlord, or the farmer, ought to be content with what remains after the producer is provided for.

Should any of these classes thus trained up at school transgress these wholesome maxims instilled into them in youth, conscience will be continually telling them they are wrong, and they will have that sort of uncomfortable feeling about them, which every man has, when

he knows he is doing an act which he dare not talk of to his neighbours, and which both his early education, and his own conscience, unite in telling him is morally wrong.

These remarks are multiplying to a so much greater length than I had intended, that I fear I may be looked upon as "building great gates to a very small city," I will, therefore, at once give such statistics of this educational experiment as are necessary to form an opinion of its worth.

The parish contains an area of 7500 acres, with a population, according to the last census of 1125 ; of this population about 800 live in the village, the rest are very much scattered, and at various distances of from two to three miles ; the farms are large, many of them uniting what formerly used to be two, three, and even four farms, making the case less favorable to the kind of plan which I am advocating, than if the parish had been divided into smaller ones.

The school and master's house were built from the Council of Education Plans for 110 children, previous to which there was nothing but a Sunday-school, with two Dame-schools, of the usual class in villages like this.

On the opening of the school in October, 1842, I examined into the books published by the different Educational Boards, and it ended by my adopting, principally the secular books published by the Irish

National Board, and by Mr. Sullivan, in connexion with it, together with others by our own Societies.

The payment for the labourer's children are two-pence per week for one, and a penny for every additional child in the same family. For the children of all those above the mere labourer, and whose parents are living in the parish, six shillings, and for those of a similar class out of the parish, ten shillings per quarter.

The school opened in October 1842, with 38 children, which in October 1843 had increased to 106.

At the end of the second year to 110.

At the end of the third year to 144.

At the end of the fourth year to 158.

On the opening of the school, the number of children paying by the quarter was 11, increased at the end of the year to 25, of which number one was from an adjoining parish.

At the end of the second year the number was 27, of which three were out of other parishes.

At the end of the third year 34, of which there were 10, and at the end of the fourth year 36, of which 14 were from other parishes; and at this present time the number is 45, of which 22 are from neighbouring parishes.

The amount of school payments for the successive years are as follow, the first column being the total amount, including books, &c.; the second being for

books alone, and showing the amount to which they have been purchased by themselves.

		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Payments of 1st year to Michaelmas	1843	56	17	3	7	5	5
2d year to ditto	1844	68	11	7	8	0	6
3d year to ditto	1845	84	6	1	11	5	3
4th year to ditto	1846	93	5	5	15	8	0

The payments of the children alone for the *present quarter*, taking the numbers as they stand in the books, will amount to £26 10s. 4d.: the yearly expenses from £110. to £120.

#### *The Salaries of Teachers.*

Master and Mistress, man and wife, £70, a house and garden.

A Second Master £20, a boy of 17, educated at the school.

Four paid Monitors, two in each school.

A very respectable Dame's school in the village is, as a preparatory school to this, more flourishing than it ever was before.

The increase in the number of children who pay by the quarter in each successive year, shows very distinctly, that the prejudice in the classes above the labourer, against sending their children to our National Schools, are gradually giving way, and at this moment there are *fourteen*, the children of farmers and respectable tradesmen, lodging in the village from Monday to Friday night, when they go home, and return the

following Monday morning. Of these, six are the children of three families, relations who have joined and taken a small house, and placed a relation in it to take care of them, and four are from a parish where there is an endowment of upwards of £90 a year for educational purposes, and one from a parish, which jointly with two others, has an endowment of a very much larger amount.

Soon after the opening of the school I recommended the children to buy the books, in order that they might have an opportunity of reading their lessons at home in the evening, and before the end of the first quarter I made it a positive rule they should do so, and in this there has not been the slightest difficulty. The extent to which they buy them, as shown by the preceding figures, is a very convincing proof of the way in which the parents estimate the education their children are getting; their being thus enabled to interest those around them at home in an evening, has been one of the causes which has contributed very much to the success of the school.

Of one small book, called the 'Sequel,' as coming between No. 2 and No. 3 of the 'Dublin Reading Books,' price 7*d.*, no fewer than five dozen of them were bought by the children in less than so many months after its introduction, and within the year upwards of 100 of them. Of a set of small Maps, 6*d.* each, published by Betts in the Strand, 63 were

bought in a very few weeks, and a very considerable number since.

The parents themselves take great interest in getting their children to point out places on the map which interest them, and in one instance, when a child said its father wished it to have a map of Australia, I was curious to know why ; it was, that some of their relations had gone out there as emigrants.

As a model school, I conceive this to have been of very great service in this part of the country : it has not only been the means of introducing a better class of books into many of the schools of the neighbourhood, but improved modes of teaching, arising from the teachers, as well as those taking an interest in village education, having visited it.

There are at present four children from it employed as teachers in other schools ; and the boy whom I have placed in the position of a second master, has, through the school and his own industry, qualified himself for any situation of the kind, and is perfectly competent to teach anything which is taught here.

Schools of an effective kind in different parts of the country, would be of great assistance in providing masters for the smaller parishes in their neighbourhood. In many instances it would be found that boys, in other respects disqualified for occupations requiring great bodily activity, would, by taking them as paid monitors, or assistants, not only help in the

success of the parent school, but would in the end be qualified to conduct others; and there are at present here several boys, who, if they could be continued two years longer, or even one, by a small allowance to their parents, would be qualified for the smaller schools; or if taken into our training schools for a year, would be well fitted in everything, excepting age, as masters where greater attainments are required.

These pecuniary results are more striking, from the fact that we have no resident gentry in the parish to assist or take any interest whatever in education; neither does it differ in any way from the ordinary run of agricultural parishes and from its neighbours, excepting in a sort of bad notoriety\* in the annals of pauperism, previous to the passing of the New Poor Law Amendment Act.

I mention this to show, that the prospect of realizing much in the way of school-payments was not very great in the commencement, and as a ground of encouragement, that where the education in our schools is made to bear on practical life, the parents themselves will make a much greater effort to pay for it than they have hitherto had credit for.

\* The poor-rate and road-rate for this parish (the latter being equally a poor-rate with the first, and no separate account kept) actually amounted, on an average of the seven years preceding Christmas, 1835, to £1600 a year, the population being 1040, according to the census of 1830, or upwards of 30 shillings a head on the whole population. This implies a degree of immorality and a state of things which it is frightful to contemplate.



Many of the poor tell me that the expenses of the schooling and books are more than saved to them from the more orderly and cleanly habits the children have acquired.

Formerly you could scarcely ride through this village without being in danger of riding over half-a-dozen children, now during school hours there are few to be seen.

After the school had been opened about two years, finding the usefulness of it of a much more extensive kind than I had anticipated, I saw the importance of adding a class room, not only for separate instruction for the more advanced boys, but as a room for several things in the way of school apparatus, which it was highly desirable to have; for instance, a small collection of the ores of metals most in use—of the raw material, and also in the worked-up state of our textile manufacture—specimens of the different woods, or any other particular vegetable products of the parish or of the country—models of any simple kind of machinery—a small philosophic apparatus, such as an air-pump, and a few common hydrostatic things—in fact, anything of that kind which might interest or help in the purposes for which education is intended.

This has, after some delay, been effected, and is at present in use.

In any attempt to educate the children of the poor there is a great difference between their case and that of

the educated classes; all the home-influences are against you, the habits of life, manner of expressing themselves, &c., in fact, out of school they are, from their habits, unlearning what they had learnt when there; and this tells in many ways, but more particularly does it make difficult the teaching them to read tolerably well.

The bad reading, I observe, is a general complaint in the Inspectors' Reports, but unless children are continued at school until all the mechanical difficulties of reading are got over, education would not afford them in after life that kind of enjoyment in their hours of leisure which otherwise might be expected from it; but these are difficulties which will gradually become less and less as education spreads.

But uneducated as the parents of the present generation are, and short as the time is which this school has been at work, I could enumerate very many instances in which they have told me how much the happiness of their firesides, and their social and domestic comfort is increased by hearing their children read to them in an evening, and telling them of what they read at school; by the interest which they take in seeing them learning their tasks, and doing the little exercises they have to do at home: generally such account as they can give in writing, of some Scripture character, or what they may know of some substance or thing used in common life.

No one, without experience, can believe how much

of conversation and of interest among themselves, in their cottages, instruction of this kind gives rise to.

I may mention such questions as the following, which they do in writing as well as they can :

Point out the various uses of soap, how it adds to our comforts and cleanliness ; and the different purposes for which iron is used ; the advantages of being able to convert it into steel ; how many kinds of tools they can enumerate which are made of it. Write down what they know of sugar, tea, coffee, and where we get them from : trace a little sketch, and put down the names of all the counties which a ship will coast along in bringing coals from Newcastle to Southampton ; and, in fact, an infinity of little questions of this kind.

Then again, in arithmetic, they are occasionally set questions to take home, such as the following :

If each person consume    lbs of sugar in a year, how much will the whole family consume, and what will it cost at    per lb. ?

Give the number of acres of the parish, and population ; how many to an acre ; number of houses, how many in a house ?

The population of the parish in 1831, was 1040, at the census of 1841 it had increased 7 per cent., what is it at present ?

Twenty per cent. of the population ought to be at school, but there are only 15 per cent., how many

are there, and how many absent who ought to be there?

It would be useless to multiply these questions here, but I have known some of them to afford amusement to a whole family for an evening; and they lead to considerable discussion among themselves, as to whether they do use more or less of such and such articles.

Hitherto they have thought little in this way, and these suggestions are of great use to them.

The more advanced boys have also a very competent knowledge of the mensuration of regular figures, whether solid or superficial; of finding out the weight of a body, from knowing its specific gravity; how a knowledge of the properties of a few simple geometrical figures simplifies, and can be applied, to all the measurements of the things with which they have to do, and this not in a parrot-like way, but are led to understand them as a matter of reasoning, and whatever they do, it is shown to them how it bears upon practical life; in fact, the three-foot rule is to the village school what Liebig says the "balance is to the laboratory." The axiom of Euclid, that "things which are equal to the same are equal to one another," does a great deal of work if properly applied.

To show what an interest this mode of teaching excites in them, I will mention an occurrence which happened a few days ago; writing in my study, I

heard a noise of joyous voices, which I found proceeded from half a dozen boys who, after school-hours, had come to measure my garden roller; the master of the school had been teaching them how to find the solid content of a roller, such as the farmers use in the fields (a hollow iron cylinder), and from knowing the specific gravity of iron to find its weight; my garden roller occurring to them they had come to practise upon it.

I have often been much struck by the degree of intelligence marked in the answers of the boys to questions of this kind, showing that their minds had been occupied by what they had been taught, and that they thoroughly understood many of the principles as applied to common life.

Questioning a class of boys who knew a little more than is ordinarily taught of geography, I asked whether the same body would weigh more at the equator or at the pole? I observed the eyes of one of them glistening with delight, thinking he had it, who answered, "At the pole, sir—at the pole;" twice repeated. "Why?"—"Because, sir, at the equator one sweats so much." Now this, although not exactly the answer I expected, was that of a reasoning mind. This boy would not have sent out a cargo of patent skates to Buenos Ayres, as Swainson, in his 'Discourse on Natural History,' states that a Sheffield cutler did, in 1806.

They have also made considerable progress in singing on the Hullah system, which is kindly taught them by one of my parishioners, and enables them to sing with correctness in church, and is a great improvement upon the old system of village psalmody; and the little moral songs which they learn are a source of amusement to many of them, both at school and at home.

On the subject of religion, great pains are taken to ground them well in scriptural knowledge, but the Bible is not used as a text-book, as it is in some of our National Schools. On a Friday, the lessons for the following Sunday, together with the psalms of the day, are read and explained to them, and their exercise given them to write on a Friday night, for the Monday morning, is generally a scriptural one: this interests the parents as well as the children. Not having time to attend the Sunday-school during the day, the first class of boys and girls come an hour on alternate Sunday evenings for scriptural reading and instruction, and I have no hesitation in saying that their knowledge of Scripture, and the interest they take in it, are much increased by the knowledge they have of their own language, and of other subjects, through the medium of secular books.

Since the 1st of January last, up to the present time, November 1st, a period of ten months, up-

wards of sixty prayer-books have been bought by the children themselves.

From the opening of the school I have never had one single question asked, either as to what was taught or what was not taught.

After the school had been opened rather more than two years I began giving to the teachers, and the more advanced of the school children, short explanations of a philosophic kind, and in a common-sense sort of way, of the things almost daily passing before their eyes, but of the nature of which they had not the slightest conception ; such as some of the peculiar properties of metals, glass, and other substances in common use ; that the air had weight, and how this pressure of the atmosphere helped them to pump up water ; enabled them to amuse themselves with squirts and pop-guns ; to suck up water, as they called it, through a straw ; why the kettle top jumped up when the water was boiling on the fire ; why, when they wanted to know whether it boiled or not, they seized the poker, and placing one end on the lid and the other to their ear, in order to know whether it actually boiled ; why a glass sometimes breaks when hot water is poured into it, explaining the reason of the unequal expansion of the two surfaces ; these, and similar things, I found so excessively amusing to them, and at the same time so instructive, that I have scarcely

missed a week explaining some principle of this nature, and in questioning them on what had been done before.

In subjects of this kind, and to children, mere verbal explanations, as every one will perceive, are of no use whatever ; but when practically illustrated before their eyes by experiment, they become not only one of the most pleasing sources of instruction, but absolutely one of the most useful.

For instance, a teacher may talk to them about a thermometer, and find in the end they just know as much about it as they did when he began, but if he shows them one, and then grasps it in his hand, telling them to look at the fluid as it rises, or plunge it into hot or cold water, and let them see the effect, they then begin to open their eyes in a wonderful manner, light breaks in upon them, and information thus given leaves an impression which in after life they turn to a source of instruction, by the reasoning powers of their own minds.

The teachers here, who at first knew but little of these matters, are now well qualified to give instruction in them ; to teach the mechanical principles of the tools they use, the spade, the axe, the plough ; and to explain such things as the common pump, barometer, pair of bellows ; metals varying in volume, according to the quantity of heat which is in them, or, as it is termed, expanding by heat and contracting by cold ;



why one substance feels colder to the hand than another ; the way in which metals are separated from their ores ; how water is converted into steam, and again condensed ; how their clothes are dried, and why they feel cold in sitting in wet clothes ; why one body floats in water and another sinks ; how much in volume, and how much in weight, a floating body displaces of the fluid in which it floats ; why, on going into the school in a cold morning, they sometimes see a quantity of water on the glass, and why it is on the inside and not on the outside ; why, when their ink is dried up, does it leave a substance behind, which does not go away ; the substances water holds in solution ; water of the springs taking up some of the soil through which it has fallen ; chalk, &c. ; equal volumes of water varying in weight according to what is taken up.

All this is mentioned to suggest to the teachers in our schools to qualify themselves for this sort of instruction.

Speaking from experience, I am quite sure there is no kind of knowledge when intelligently given, more likely to raise the character of the village school than this ; but previously to attempting it, all the mechanical difficulties of reading are supposed to have been got over, and that the principles of common arithmetic, and all its applications to the ordinary purposes of life, are well understood.

One thing intended by this pamphlet is, to point out the kind and extent of secular knowledge given in what has been thought a successful attempt (so far as a trial of four years is concerned) to raise the standard of acquirement to be had at a National School, and in that way bring together the children of the labouring classes, and their employers, for the purposes of education ; a thing of such importance in its consequences to both classes after leaving school, and if effected, likely to have such an influence for good on the social relations of both, that any attempt to carry it out, however imperfect, must, I think, meet with a favorable reception.

Hitherto it has been too much assumed as a principle in educating the poor, to confine the instruction to a mere reading of Scripture, and to getting over the mechanical difficulties of doing so, and that it was in no way necessary to give them any knowledge of the material world around them; the consequence of which has been, that the merely being able to read is very often but imperfectly accomplished, and many of the parents have been in the habit of sending their children from motives entirely apart from the instruction to be had at our schools.

But it may be asked, do the children remain to an age to profit from instruction of this kind ?

The labourers generally do not send their children, particularly the boys, beyond the age, however young,

when they can find employment for them, but there are some who do, and many more who are anxious to do it, and in this respect every year will bring about an improvement.

The parents of this class are too apt to think them educated when they can write a little ; a little writing being, in the idea of most of them, the perfection of education : with the rising generation a better standard will be adopted, and it will even now be found that there are many cases of labourers, who from being more successful, or perhaps more prudent than their neighbours, from having, in some instances, had a little property left them, some, from placing a higher value upon education than others, are most anxious to send their children beyond the very early age when they have been in the habit of sending them out to work. I have known a father say, " Sir, it gives me such pleasure to see what my boy is doing, that I would even live on bread and water to send him longer to school." This is no uncommon feeling, but they are so circumstanced as not to be able to act upon it : surely feelings of this kind tend to humanize and improve !

At this present time, there is a class of fifteen boys to whom this kind of instruction is given, and who are well capable of understanding it ; six of them are the children of labourers, the rest those of tradesmen and farmers.

In agricultural districts, the employer does not

encourage the labourer to educate his child, on the contrary, his mode of thinking and of acting is in every way against it. He has no feeling that the respectability of the labouring classes would be advanced by education ; or if he has, he immediately becomes jealous of their being brought nearer to himself, not seeing that the class to which he belongs will in the end be equally advanced.

In fact, he has no notion of worth in the labourer, as a man, or as a fellow-creature, but only values him as a machine, or instrument, by which a certain quantity of work is to be performed ; and does not think that, although he professes to be a Christian, it is any part of his duty, as such, to endeavour to improve the moral condition of the labourers about him, by making them more intelligent, more sober, and better conducted in every relation of life, or that, by doing so, he adds to his own respectability.

In the eyes of too many of the employers, the labourer who spends his money at the beer-house, neglects his family, and is perfectly regardless as to how they are brought up, is considered quite as useful as the one who would struggle hard to get his children an education, and try to raise them above those low and degraded habits to which they have hitherto been accustomed. Let those who act thus, if higher motives will not influence them, weigh well the observation of a modern writer, that, "independent of moral grounds,

the kindness, sympathy, and attention of an employer to his workmen, is the safest and most profitable money speculation in which he can engage."

I have never known a single instance of a farmer encouraging the labourer to send his children for a longer period to school, however trifling the work for which he wanted them. I have known instances of a parent wishing to continue a child, but his employer prevented him by requiring his services when so young, that it would have been far more creditable to have employed an older boy. Conscience never steps in and says (or if it does they do not listen), "now I should be doing a very kind act, and only what is my Christian duty to this poor boy, if I were to delay employing him for six months and send him to school, or enable his father to do so by giving him an additional shilling a week, or even to allow his parents to continue him as long as they are able."

True, the education within their reach has hitherto never been such as to make either class set much value upon it; there is therefore nothing strange in their not reasoning about it in this way.

I have also introduced instruction of an elementary kind connected with chemical agriculture, adopting as a school book the Catechism on this subject published by Professor Johnston, and illustrating it by a small apparatus which I had on my own premises, but now placed in the class room of the school: placing before

them, as clearly as possible, what was meant by organic and inorganic matter; calling their attention to the ashes remaining after any substance of a vegetable kind was burnt; how small a portion remained; that the quantity of ashes was different in different parts of the same plant; the difference in weight between the ashes remaining when burning a given weight of the straw and of the grain; what the ashes consisted of; that in burning vegetable matter the ash remained which might be turned to a useful purpose, as they all were aware, in manuring the ground, and again feeding other plants; and how the volatile parts were subservient to the same purpose; how plants were nourished, and that they cannot take up their food in a solid state, &c.; telling them to observe when they are burning different kinds of wood in their own cottages, how much the quantity of ash varies, particularly to notice the difference between elm and willow, &c.

The different tables in the book of the quantity of ashes remaining after burning given weights of certain vegetable substances, and the nature of the products which are left, and of the composition of soils, may be made most instructive, by showing them what the plant is made up of, and reasoning from this what ought to be found in the ground in addition to what is supplied through the atmosphere, in order that it may be a healthy and productive plant; calling their

attention to the much greater quantity of some particular substances taken out of the ground by some crops than by others, and that therefore a succession of crops of the same kind would exhaust the ground of that particular substance, and would be bad farming ; that knowing the particular substances taken out of the ground by a crop of wheat, oats, barley, rye, grass, &c., as shown them by these tables, they should endeavour to find out such manures as would give it back to the ground.

Then again with respect to animals—the food which they eat must contain all the elements necessary to form the flesh, bones, muscles, &c., as it was clear they could be formed in no other way ; but we had also direct proof, as the chemist could take them to pieces, as it were, and show what bone, muscle, &c. was made of ; and on examination it was found that they were made up of the very same elementary things as the food which the animals fed upon ; that perhaps one particular vegetable did not contain all the materials necessary, but some contained one and some another, and that a variety of food within certain limits was good ; that if a young animal ate a food which contains what would make fat and flesh, but had nothing in it of which bone was made, it could not make bone, and would most likely die ; that milk of animals was found to be a perfect nutriment, and containing everything necessary for making bone, muscle, flesh, &c., and was

therefore good for young people ; that the farmer very often makes the observation from experience, that such a field or pasture is good for young stock,--another field for fattening, which means, in the first pasture, there are certain plants, or grasses, which contain all the elements of bone, flesh, muscle, sinews, and which are necessary for building up a strong and healthy animal ; in the second, the plants and grasses are more favorable for producing fatty matter, and as grown up animals do not want to make bone, this is the kind of pasture for them.

This is a subject clearly within their comprehension, and not only that, but one, if intelligently taught, in which they will take great delight. The interest which many of the children here, even in the little which has been attempted, seem to take is of the most lively kind, and has often brought across my mind an account which I read many years ago, in Ellis's 'Polynesian Researches,' of the great curiosity and astonishment shown by the South Sea Islanders, on seeing the first printed sheets issue from the press. The very mention of things, such as that grass contains bone, or the elements of it, is quite as strange to this class of children, as printing was to the natives of the South Sea Islands.

The bearing of this subject being so completely on what is to be the future occupation in life of the great majority here, whether as labourers or as the employers



of labour in agriculture, gives it a value, both in the eyes of the parents and children, which no other subject can have, independent of its being so attractive in itself to every inquiring mind.

If introduced into our National Schools, where the standard of acquirement is such as to admit of it (and this ought to be the case in all), it would not only have a tendency to bring the children of the farmer to the village school, but would be the means of introducing among the agricultural class a kind of knowledge which, at the same time that it is intimately connected with their occupations, has a great tendency to cultivate the mind, and is one of which the present race of farmers are entirely ignorant; they are, however, no readers, and I fear that such works as those on Chemical Agriculture by Prof. Johnston, admirable as they are, will find but few to read them among the occupying class of farmers in the south of England.

Some time ago, wanting a copy of the 'Western Agriculturist,' the first three numbers containing Lectures on Chemical Agriculture by Mr. Conybeare, I wrote to the publisher at Axminster, who told me in reply, that the attempt to continue this little work, notwithstanding the cheapness of it, and the great attraction of Mr. Conybeare's name, had entirely failed; and that so illiterate and prejudiced were the farmers there, that only ONE in the parish (one of the

largest in the county), had condescended to read Mr. Conybeare's Lectures ; such would be the case in any part of the south of England, until a generation rises up instructed in this kind of knowledge at our parish schools.

The personal cleanliness of the children, more particularly of the girls, has been a matter of general remark, so much so, that strangers have said—" they cannot be the children of the labouring class—your labourers must have higher wages than are usually given ;" now, the fact is, these children have become more orderly, and are beginning to feel that cleanliness and well-mended clothes are necessary to their comfort ; their parents find it attended with no greater expense than rags and dirt, only requiring better regulated habits. Habits of this kind in the girls, who are taught to be good workers, having one half of the day for sewing, will have the greatest influence on the next generation.

A little girl, of five or six years old, not giving a very wise answer to a question asked her by a lady, on the latter asking her what she thought her little head was given for, curtsied, and said, "to comb ma'am;" so that it was quite clear that in this case, at all events, lessons of cleanliness had made an impression.

No one can have had much intercourse with our peasantry, without having to regret the great want of

truth which prevails among them in matters of daily life : this want of openness in their dealings has been, in a great measure, brought about by the way in which they are treated by their employers ; many of whom take advantage of any improvement in their circumstances which may render them a little less dependent upon daily labour for their living. I hope the rising generation will be trained up in better principles.

Observing to a father, whose boy had been guilty of telling a falsehood, how important it was to bring up his children with a greater regard to truth, he answered, "I always tells my children nothing *bates* the truth," but in a tone of indifference, which showed he did not care whether they did so or not. I have always instructed the teachers to be extremely careful never to frighten and ferret a child into a lie ; and have strictly enjoined them, always, and at once, with great and small, to believe them, unless they have strong reasons for the contrary ; to express great satisfaction with any openness of character and candour which they may see in any of them ; and I have myself, on all occasions, treated them as if they would scorn a lie. From this I conceive great good has arisen ; and the bold way in which they avow their faults, or confess, for instance, they have not complied with certain school rules in matters of cleanliness, and in which they might easily deceive, is most pleasing

to see. On such occasions the clean ones are placed at the top of the class for the morning, giving the others great credit for telling the truth, which is a Christian virtue which stands before cleanliness, but that those who have acted up to both must be preferred.

I find, almost daily, circumstances occurring, which, trifling in themselves, throw great light upon the way in which education works; and, although I could relate many, I will confine myself to two, which occurred within the last few days.

Calling at the cottage of a school-girl, who was sick, and who was living with her grandmother—on saying, I hoped she would be well enough to be in school again in a few days, the grandmother said, “You may be sure of that, sir, if she is well, for there is no keeping her away from it;” and the girl gently replied, “I am sure, grandmother, you would not wish me to stay away;” when the old woman very affectionately answered, “No, indeed, my dear child, I would not.” Such an instance of the humanizing effects of education is very pleasing.

At another cottage, the mother said, “You cannot think how pleasantly we spend our evenings now, compared with what we used to do; the girls reading and getting their lessons while I am sewing, and their father working with them; and he is so disappointed, sir, if *the evening task is above him*, so that he cannot help in it.”

In two or three instances, it has been told me, "Well, sir, for the first three or four months my child was at the National School, I thought it could not read a chapter in the Testament a bit better than it did when at the dame's school, and I was dissatisfied ; but I now find out I was under a sad mistake, it is now quite astonishing what he is doing, and all that time he was learning something, which helped him on wonderfully." In one case, the mother actually sent a message to the school, "That she hoped they would not teach her child all that nonsense, as she would rather it learned nothing than that"—a little piece of poetry with a good moral to learn by heart—such is the absurdity of some of the parents !

During the four years which the school has been at work, I do not think there have been half a dozen cases where the children have not provided themselves with the necessary books, and every child may be seen going home with what Mr. Moseley, in his Report, calls "the accustomed satchel," either over his shoulder or in his hand, having the means to instruct himself at home, and to add cheerfulness to his father's fireside. Nothing connected with this school has given me more pleasure (in fact, it has amply repaid me for all I have done) than the satisfaction which I have heard expressed by many of the parents, of the increase of their own domestic happiness, arising from the interest they take in their children's learning, and

the way in which they are now able to spend their evenings at home, in listening to their reading.

At first, the parents were too apt to attempt to interfere in the discipline; this very soon ceased, but in the first year, not fewer than thirty were taken away, because they would not conform to the rules of the school; in one instance, where a boy had been kept in at noon, the father went and took him away to a cricket match; the boy actually begged his father, who was afterwards very sorry for what he had done, to let him return in order to undergo his punishment, and not run the risk of losing the benefit of the school.

The good effects, as shown in the children, are that they are more respectful and obedient to their parents, and to all around them—more alive to the decencies and respectabilities of life—more truthful—more honest—have stronger feelings of self-respect, and their conduct in every way is very striking, when contrasted with that of those who have not availed themselves of the advantages which the school offers. There is a modesty and pleasingness of demeanour in the girls, which must be evident to every one who sees them; and there are several instances of those who are out at service having already realized all that one expected from them, and are, I hope, becoming what every well-wisher of society would have the working population to be—  
“cheerful and contented with their lot in this life, and

looking confidently forward, through the atoning merits of their Redeemer, to the life of the world to come."

Of all classes in society, there is none so powerful for good in this matter of education as the clergy, and in the rural districts at least, it almost wholly depends upon them whether an efficient system can be established or not; in small parishes it is impossible to have a thoroughly good school on anything like a self-paying principle, but they might still maintain the kind of school they do at present for the younger children; for their wants beyond this, they would naturally connect themselves with the larger schools in the neighbourhood, and if those who have the power would set about it in earnest, it would not be too much to expect that, within a very few years, schools of an efficient kind for the joint education of the labouring classes, and those immediately above them, might be very extensively established in every county in England.

Theoretical writers and speakers may stir up a temporary feeling in favour of education in the public mind, and this will help to a first establishment of the necessary machinery for working it out; but, after all, the more vital part rests with those who are to be the instruments of doing it, and both from his position, his acquirements, his constant residence, no one can be so effective as the clergyman of the parish.

Some, perhaps, will say this is becoming village

schoolmaster, but it is no such thing ; it only requires a small amount of time, systematically given, and I think almost every one will agree, that in no other way could an hour a day for three or four days in the week be productive of anything like the same amount of good as when spent in the village school. With many of those who are grown up, and whose habits are formed, humanly speaking, little good can be effected ; their ignorance is so great, that religion in them can scarcely be regarded as anything more than a superstition acting upon their fears, and with no influence whatever upon their conduct as men in any of the relations of life ; it is only through the children, and that by educating them, that any extensive good can be effected.

Since the school here was established, I have given almost constantly an hour, and sometimes an hour and a half a day to it ; looking at the exercises, hearing them read, giving a cheering word to one, and an encouraging look to another, pointing out their faults ; in this way much is done in a little time, and the best possible effects arise from it.

The clergyman's support, or that of some influential and educated person, is not only wanted in the school, but he may do much by endeavouring to raise the social position of the schoolmaster, and by supporting his authority in matters where the parents, from ignorance, are sometimes too apt to interfere ; but where the



education is good, it only requires firmness to get the better of all this.

The real difficulty of the question is not with the people, or the classes to be educated, but in getting it out of the hands of the talking men, and into those of the practical and working ones ; and in persuading those who are to direct and do the work of it, to do it in a common-sense way, and with common-sense views, that instead of starting difficulties to begin with, many of which are of an imaginary kind—and would in practice never arise—to begin on a plan, good in itself, so far as the knowledge to be had at the school is concerned, and if this is done, I feel persuaded the classes to be educated will throw no difficulties whatever in the way.

I should be satisfied in having made public this account of the working of a village school, if it in any way affords encouragement to those of the clergy, or of any other class who contemplate improvements in the matter of education in their own parishes, or in their own neighbourhoods. They cannot have greater obstacles to contend with than here, nor do I pretend to say they will meet with less. From the first I formed no extravagant notions as to its success, I never imagined that every parent would send his children, but, as a matter of common sense, that the more respectable ones would do so in the first instance, and the rest would follow ; that the parents, from igno-

rance, and from not knowing and properly estimating the difficulties of the schoolmaster, would, in some instances, act very absurdly, but in the end that they would have their eyes opened and see their mistake; neither did I expect every child to turn out well, who had been educated at the school (I certainly expected to have those pointed out to me who turned out ill); neither do I deny, that an educated man may be more powerful for evil than if he had not been educated, but this, I think, only applies when those about him have been brought up in ignorance, and that if one in any way turns out ill, the rest are made much more capable of resisting the bad example. These opinions I feel strengthened every day by the experience which this school affords.

It has often been remarked to me, "all this seems to be very good which you are doing, and to go on very successfully, but wait and see how they turn out," and various sort of dampers, such as—"a succeeding incumbent may not take the interest in it that you do, and then all this will fall to the ground." Now, the successor to a person, who takes up a plan which has been successful, would have a much easier task than the person who originates it; our growing institutions for the training of masters would make it a much more easy thing to find qualified teachers. An effective school, when it has once taken root, stands a much better chance of being made lasting than one of

a less pretending kind ; instead of having only one person, the clergyman, feeling an interest in it ; all classes, the parents of every class, would feel an interest in the well-working of what they had found so beneficial to themselves, and would take a lively interest in securing the same advantages to their children ; besides this, an efficient system of inspection, and taking place more frequently than at present, would, in a great measure, be a guarantee against future relapse.

Inspection is not only good, as to seeing what is taught, and how a school is conducted, but, if attended with examination into the acquirements of the school, it gives rise to a sort of emulation on the part of the more advanced children, to stand well in the opinion of the inspector, as well as increased exertion on the part of the teachers, that they may do so.

It also attaches an idea of importance to education in their eyes, which it is right to encourage, as well as a feeling that there are others in the world beside those immediately about them, who feel an interest in their welfare.

On the occasion of Mr. Allen's last visit here, this was very forcibly shown, from the way in which they worked for a few weeks previous to his coming. At his examination, he gave the first class, of both boys and girls, a few written questions, to be answered also in writing ; with their answers he expressed great satisfaction, and, seeing the effect of this, I desired

them to provide copybooks for the purpose of occasionally entering their school exercises with the dates ; these books to be shown to the Inspector on his next visit, as a test of what they were doing, and as a means of judging of the progress made between his periods of inspection. A few questions asked on these exercises, would at once show the examiner, how far they understood what they had been doing.

Such books have been kept, and having told them a few weeks ago that Mr. Allen was likely to be down in December, there is clearly more pains taken by many of them, both in the writing and in the matter, with a view to his good opinion when looking over the book, as well as greater attention in their school lessons, from a wish to do well in the examination.

It is a good plan, to point out more particularly certain subjects for them to attend to, previous to an inspector's visit, which teaches them to fix their attention.

The difficulties of establishing a school on anything like a self-paying system, has always appeared to me to be much greater in an agricultural parish, than in a town where the population is not extended over so large a surface, and the number of tradesmen, &c., and of those who are able to pay such sums as 6s. and 10s. per quarter, and even larger sums, much greater. I have no doubt, whatever, in my own mind, that in every town of 1000 people, there are all the necessary

elements of a self-paying system; and I would also extend the observation to all agricultural parishes, of the same amount of population.

I have no wish to hold this up as an example for more than it is worth, or to wish, that those who read it, may draw larger conclusions than the data justify them in doing; whether the number of facts explained, are sufficient to entitle it to the attention of those interested in the promotion of education, those who read must judge; I am not aware of leaving out anything, which might help them to a right conclusion, or of inserting anything, which might lead them to a wrong one.

It has been a matter of complaint, that the better educated masters and mistresses brought up in our training schools, leave their profession for other employments in which they are better paid; this is natural, and cannot be blamed; but might not some system of superannuation after a certain number of years' service, (I mean of good and effective service), and after having arrived at a certain age, be adopted, as an inducement to remain?

Surely in a profession so useful to the public, it is worthy the consideration of government, to see whether any such plan could be adopted. The system of inspection, if properly carried out, would guard the public against abuse.

Perhaps also, a plan of a mutual benefit society for

schoolmasters of a county or large district, might be worth consideration.

Some may think it is going too far, to say that a general theory or system can be attempted, founded on a single experiment, but still there are cases in which a single experiment, may amount almost to a demonstration of the general proposition, and this I conceive to be the nature of the case here.

“ The evidence of a theory becomes stronger, by the number of facts which it explains, and the accuracy with which it explains them, and diminishes by the number which it does not explain.”

Now what are the conditions under which the experiment is made ?

What are the facts which it will explain ? and what are those it will not explain ?

The experiment is tried in an agricultural parish, having a certain amount of population scattered over a given area,—their occupations chiefly agriculture and the trades it gives rise to,—their educational wants and present state of education,—their feelings in favour or against it,—their means of paying for it,—their condition, moral and physical ;—all these may be taken as of an average kind, and belonging to the same number of people in any of the rural districts in England,—the schoolmaster fairly qualified and anxious to improve,—the clergyman taking up education in earnest, and desirous to advance it,—

the kind of education such as is described before—these are the data.

The facts proved are,—

That the poor, as a class, have shown themselves willing and more ready to pay for their education, books, &c., than they have hitherto had credit for.

That the classes immediately above the labourer, their employers, are glad to avail themselves of a good education, in conjunction with the labouring class, and their former prejudices against our National Schools and schools of that kind, as places of education for their own children, entirely vanish. -

That schools established on this principle of united education of a really effective kind, when the first expenses of building, of school apparatus, fittings, &c., are provided for, would in many districts be absolutely self-paying ; and in others so nearly so, that the expenses falling upon those who made themselves responsible, would not be great ; much less than in schools where the standard of education is of a lower kind.

That the moral effects both on children and parents, so far as can be judged from an experience of four years, are of the most encouraging kind.

That such schools might be very extensively established in the larger parishes throughout England, by the assistance of the clergy and others interested in the education of the poor.

The difficulty no doubt is, and this the experiment cannot explain, in getting the clergyman, or others who are competent to the task, in the locality where a school is to be established, to take such an interest in it as will ensure success; hence arises the necessity of looking out for such places as, all things considered, model schools would be likely to succeed in; this of course is more particularly the business of boards of education, and of those who, from their situation in life, may have influence beyond the locality in which they live; the material to work upon is the same or nearly the same in every district in England, and, through our training schools, the difficulty of finding qualified teachers becoming every day less, and the feeling in favour of education greater: these considerations afford ground for hope that all difficulties of whatever kind may shortly be overcome.

These observations, whether from my not having sufficiently compressed what I wanted to say, or from what other cause I do not know, but they certainly are of greater length than I had intended them to be; the opinions expressed have arisen from watching with an observing eye the daily working of the school here



for the last four years, its effects both upon children and upon parents, and are in no way the result of mere theory, or of opinions formed before I took this in hand; looking at them in this light as the result of experience, I have thought them worth offering to the public. I am no enthusiast in the matter; I know and see that great practical good is attainable, and that the difficulties, so far as the people to be educated are concerned, and I think I know them well, are by no means so great as they have hitherto been looked upon. Should the cause of education be in any way advanced by publishing these observations, my wishes will be attained.\*

\* There is a lending library in connexion with the school; the number of books taken out, from 1st of Jan. 1845 to 29th of Dec., was 540, calling each little separate thing a book. Of the usefulness of this, there can be no doubt, and although the actual reading is confined, or nearly so, to those who are, or have been at school—in fact very few of the others can read—yet through the children, it is a source of instruction both to young and old.

There are three instances of girls, who had had a little education such as the dames give, but who were too old to come to school when it opened, who have, through these books, and the help of their younger brothers and sisters, managed to educate themselves,—one now gone out into respectable service, and in two of the cases, with the exception of writing, they are nearly as well educated, as those at school.

## IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

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HAVING spent about two months, at the end of last summer, in Ireland, I took the opportunity of visiting a very considerable number of National and other schools, and, in a great many cases, of personally examining into the kind of education given, the numbers that attended, the acquirements of the children, the feelings of the people on the subject, and into any other points which might enable a stranger to form a correct opinion, as to how far the National system of education was a successful one, and whether it gave promise of realizing those practical good effects on the country at large, which its friends and supporters say are likely to result from it.

I certainly entertain an opinion, as far as my own experience goes justly so, that there is a want of information in England on the Irish National system, and that the public have been labouring under great mistakes, as to the view and intentions of the Board appointed to work it out, and have little or no knowledge either of the books published by the Board, or

the kind of education to be had at the schools under their control. Many, I think, have entertained opinions against the books, and against the system, without in any way having examined into either, and others, again, have entertained feelings in favour of them with quite as little foundation for their opinion.

There is also, I think, a good deal of misunderstanding as to the origin of the system : some labouring under the idea that it was a hastily got up plan in 1831, by the then government, and that it had none of that consideration, given to it, which is due to a plan calling itself National ; others, that it, as well as the books adopted in the schools, originated entirely with the present Board of Education, who had, in fact, nothing whatever to do with framing it, but are a body appointed for working out the system adopted by the State.

The plan itself is mainly founded on a Report, made in 1812, of a Commission issuing from the Crown in 1806, at the head of which was the then primate, and the Report is signed by him, by the then Archbishop of Cashel, the Bishop of Killala, and Dr. Elrington then Provost of Trinity College—a recommendation coming with greater church authority one can scarcely conceive.

It was adopted by a commission from the Crown in 1825, by a committee of the House of Commons in 1828, and again in 1830, so that the plan, so far from being a hastily got up one, seems to have been under

the contemplation of the different governments from 1812 to the time when it was adopted in 1831.

This Report of 1812, after stating that the various plans hitherto adopted had failed, goes on to say—"No plan, however wisely and unexceptionally contrived in other respects, can be carried into effectual execution in this country, unless it be explicitly avowed, and clearly understood as its leading principle, that no attempt shall be made to influence or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or description of Christians ;" it then recommends a Board constituted like the present, its selection of proper books, and, amongst these, extracts from Scripture of the kind published by it ; and although not being acted upon for so long a period, may imply that it was attended with difficulty, yet this, if it were so, also proves that no government, or commission, or committee could devise any better system, than the one which has been adopted : such was the origin of the plan.

On the subject of the books published by the Board, the scriptural extracts, and the mode of using them in the National Schools, there is, I think, a good deal of misconception among us.

Many of the clergy, as well as others who take an interest in education, imagine that the Bible is excluded from the National Schools in Ireland, and that the extracts alone are permitted to be read.

This, on inquiry, they will find is an error. So far as the secular books are concerned, I have put them

into the hands of many of my neighbours and others, who have uniformly acknowledged the excellence of them, and I should have no hesitation whatever, in putting the extracts into the hands of any child in whose education I took an interest, with the same views with which they are introduced into the National Schools.

The following extract from the preface to the Scripture Lessons will show the views of the Commissioners in introducing them.

“ These selections are offered, not as a substitute for the Sacred Volume itself, but as an introduction to it, and they have been compiled in the hope of their leading to a more general and more profitable perusal of the Word of God.

“ The Board of Commissioners of Education earnestly and unanimously recommend these lessons to be used in all the schools receiving aid from them.

“ And to the religious instructors of the children they cheerfully leave, in communicating instruction, the use of the Sacred Volume itself, as containing those doctrines and precepts, a knowledge of which must be at the foundation of all true religion.”

The extracts being a part of the regular school books, may be read at the school hours for secular instruction, the Bible or the catechism of any particular church, only at the time appointed for religious instruction, at which time the teacher attends, and assists the clergyman of his own persuasion in giving religious instruction to the pupils.

The following observations arise out of my own personal knowledge, and from having examined with somewhat the eye of an inspector into a very great number of schools, not less than fifty or sixty, many of them in rural districts taken as chance threw them in my way, in a ramble in part over all the four provinces. In many of these I entered into that kind of examination, which a person conversant in matters of this kind, and taking an interest in them is likely to do, and in doing which, in Ireland a stranger will always find the greatest encouragement, both on the part of the schoolmasters and of the Boards of management connected with them; in others I was a mere looker-on.

One of the first things which occurs to an Englishman on entering an Irish school, in the rural districts more particularly, is the ragged condition of the children, want of shoes, &c., when compared with the same class in his own country; but when he looks on the surrounding cabins and reflects on the social condition of the peasantry, he sees at once that it would be unreasonable to expect to see them otherwise.

My visits first commenced in the south of Ireland, with the schools which happened to be on or near the roadside, and in almost every case I found the attendance much greater than from the nature of the district I should have expected; many of the children coming a distance of four or five Irish miles; another thing very observable was the greater ages of the children of

both sexes than in our schools, but this no doubt is in part explained by the great want of employment, which applies to all ages ; but, independent of this, there is a more lively and active feeling among the labouring classes in favour of education, than exists at present in this country, and there is a great aptness and quickness in the children which give them an interest in what they are doing.

In this class of schools, I found in most of them, I may say in all where the master had been trained to the work, a knowledge of their reading books—(I am speaking of the secular books of the Board, parts of which are relating to Scripture history)—of geography, grammar, and of arithmetic, which it was most pleasing to find, and which, I cannot hesitate to say, was much greater than is to be found, or even aimed at, in our own National Schools in the rural districts.

The previous knowledge which I had of the books, and of their contents, gave me great facility in examining ; and I was much amused with the master in one which I visited in company with an Irish gentleman, who from my not having explained that I was an English stranger, on our leaving the school, took an opportunity of asking if I was a commissioner, and if so, he hoped I would represent his school to the Board in Dublin as I had found it. The children did very well, and although there were only a few scattered cabins in the immediate neighbourhood, upwards of

100 children were present, many of them coming a distance of four Irish miles. The school hours, from ten to four. The master here had one great difficulty to contend with, and which is the case with many others, teaching the children a language which many of the parents do not speak.

This district was one in which there were very few Protestants, and on my asking the question whether there were any Protestant children in the school, the answer was "No." "Why?" "Because they are too proud." This answer must not be mistaken; its real meaning was, that there were very few Protestants in the parish, and those of a class above sending their children to the National Schools.

This would apply to the greater part of the south of Ireland.

In one school, of a larger kind than the previous ones, the master was a young man of whose qualifications, from conversation, I thought more favorably than of any I had yet met with. He had just been advanced to the first class of trained masters, that is, the class receiving £20 a year from the Board; and, although I had not an opportunity of seeing his scholars, it being vacation, yet I was much pleased by his intelligence and manner, his clean and neat appearance, and by the lively interest he took in his profession. In this school, of 120 boys, there were as many as eighteen or twenty reading the fifth book



of Lessons, and he had been advanced to the first class of masters from the Inspector, on his last visit, having been so much pleased with the *class in science* which he had formed ; this was the first time I had heard the expression made use of in speaking of education in a National School, and it forcibly attracted my attention ; although I had not an opportunity of testing its meaning and its worth, as applied to his own school, it was not lost upon me in those I visited afterwards.

From observation I was led to think that the system of classification of the teachers by the Board, and of increasing the salaries of those who may be considered deserving, worked well ; it is only for three years at a time, thus holding out an inducement for continued exertion, in order to retain the increase when it has once been granted.

The whole country is divided into 32 school districts, each having a superintendent who inspects, and reports each school in his district, at least three times in each year ; and examinations are held from time to time by the superintendents, with the view of raising meritorious teachers to a higher class, or of depressing others who may have conducted themselves improperly, or in whose schools the attendance has considerably decreased.

The next I examined was in a small town, there were present 105 in the boys' school ; the principal

class of more than twenty, were many of them of a much more advanced age than any I had yet seen; some of them qualifying themselves for being surveyors, and occupations of a similar description, and belonging to a class of life, who were able to pay for their instruction; some paying as high as 7*s.* 6*d.* per quarter.

The master asked me if I should wish to hear them examined in any particular subject, and, on my answering in anything he liked, he called out "Geometers, come forward." This I thought was rather grand, but, to my astonishment, a class of not fewer than eighteen, whose ages were from fifteen to twenty, came forward. He set them two propositions in the first book of Euclid, which they demonstrated with accuracy; and I then asked them various questions connected with the properties of simple geometrical figures, and as to how far they were able to apply what they knew, to those purposes of practical mensuration, which, in them, constituted the real value of this kind of knowledge;—to all this they answered well.

Bearing in mind what the master at a previous school had said, about having formed a class in science, I then asked a variety of questions on ordinary subjects of this nature, and I am not aware of having asked one to which I did not receive an intelligent answer.

To the questions on the fourth and fifth reading-books of The Board, their answers were equally satisfactory.

The clergyman here, I understood, was a supporter of the National system, and had broken up his own school, and sent all the children to this.

In the larger towns I found, in many of the National Schools, three or four hundred boys, and, in nearly all, a large class reading the fourth and fifth books; in some of them, as in the one I have just mentioned, books of a mathematical kind are introduced, of a more extensive nature than those published by the Board. There seems to be a greater desire for this kind of knowledge in the south of Ireland particularly, a more general acquaintance with it, than in this country.

In nearly all these schools I found the more advanced pupils well acquainted with the subjects of the books, and having a very fair knowledge of things connected with them,—geography, grammar, arithmetic, all very good. The great attention paid to grammar arises, I suppose, from the English being taught, in some measure, as a foreign language.

To the questions which I asked on the lessons connected with Scripture History, in the different books published by The Board, very satisfactory answers were given; and I have no reason to suppose, that less attention is given to this department of their reading books, belonging to the ordinary school-hours, than to any other.

I did not ask any questions, which might be sup-

posed to infringe upon the school-rules, and therefore cannot speak on my own authority beyond this. The Board sees that one day a week, at least, is set apart for religious instruction, and to say that the children are neglected in this respect, would be to accuse, of a neglect of duty, those to whom it particularly belongs, to see that this important part of their instruction is not neglected.

At Limerick the National system does not seem to prevail, as I could find no schools in connexion with it. There is a very large school for about 400 under the Christian Brothers, but, it being vacation, I had no opportunity of forming an opinion of the instruction given, beyond what was implied in the books and educational apparatus, which seemed to be very good.

I observed also, that the National School books were not introduced into the schools of the poor-house, so that, I suppose, there may be some opposition to the system here, with which I am not acquainted.

During my stay in Dublin I made frequent visits to the Model Schools in Marlborough street. The buildings are spacious and well adapted to the purposes for which they are intended; school-rooms well supplied with every kind of educational apparatus, and the whole bearing an appearance of doing its work well. This I found, on examination, to be the case.

Both schools of boys and girls, having from 400 to 500 in each, will, in point of cleanliness, bear a com-

parison with any large schools I have ever seen ; although I fear, in the girl's school, to an English eye, there appears to be a little propensity to finery.

The regularity and order with which everything was conducted—the business-like manner and energy displayed in the teaching department—the amount and kind of instruction which I listened to, as being given to the more advanced pupils, and the interest which they appeared to take in it,—all this denoted a superior organization, and made an impression upon my mind of the most pleasing kind. I found, on examination, the acquirements in both schools quite equal to what the appearance led me to expect.

One morning I was present when the head master was teaching the senior part of the boys' school in a separate class-room, when, to oblige me, he went into an examination of them, in which I also joined : in this they gave proof of a knowledge of the subjects of their books, and of things connected with them,—of the application of their knowledge of arithmetic, and of similar subjects, which convinced me that these boys had received a good education, and one fitting them for all the purposes of ordinary life. The knowledge of geography in both schools was remarkable, but in a large class of the senior part of the girls' school, fitting themselves for teachers, I had never seen in females anything like the knowledge which they had on this subject.

The training department for teachers is under very able management, and is effecting a great deal every year towards improving the class of school teachers all over the country; the number trained last year was 260.

In Ireland more particularly, it is highly important to give the teaching as much of an industrial character as possible, and of this the Board seems to be aware, having established a model farm at Glasnevin, a short distance from Dublin, in order to give the teachers a practical knowledge in agriculture; and there are also three or four other smaller agricultural schools established. They have, however, not yet been able to carry out their plans of this kind to anything like the extent which is desirable, but this I believe is owing to want of funds, and not from any doubt as to the necessity of it, having resolved upon establishing 32 model schools, one in each school district, and many of them of an industrial kind.

In the schools of the north of Ireland I found, where the teachers had been trained, the instruction and acquirements much of the same character and equally satisfactory with those I have mentioned before: to go into details would lengthen these observations far beyond what I wish; but there is a small agricultural school at Larne, in the county of Antrim, deserving of particular mention. The school-room good and well appointed in every respect, the cleanli-

ness and outward appearance of the children, the extent and kind of knowledge in which they are instructed, fitting them, both in practice and in theory, as young pioneers for introducing a new and improved system of farming in the neighbourhood, gives this school in such a country as Ireland a very peculiar interest.

After having walked with the master over the six acres of ground connected with the school, and seen the improved way in which it is managed, I spent some time in examining the pupils, both in their ordinary school acquirements and in their knowledge of chemical agriculture. In all this they acquitted themselves extremely well, and some of them interested me very much by the good sense way in which they came to their conclusions, showing they were well instructed, and did credit to the master.

Schools like this ought, if possible, to be established very extensively in Ireland, and, if encouraged by the landed proprietors, would no doubt lead to the most beneficial results.

This is a proof of how much individuals may do in their own neighbourhood, as I believe a great deal of the getting up of this school; and the energy in working it, is owing to Dr. Kirkpatrick, of Larne, whom I regret not having had the pleasure of seeing on the occasion of my visit.

On the subject of mixed education in this part of

Ireland, I will quote a letter by the Rev. J. Smith, A. M., Rector of Island-magee, and addressed to the Bishop of Cashel, he says, "I have visited and personally examined into the circumstances of several National Schools, in the county of Antrim,—I think not less than twenty, possibly more, all of which are found within a circle of ten or fifteen miles around the neighbourhood (Larne). In *no one* of these schools, as far as I can recollect, have I found a class of children exclusively of one religion, excepting one (his own) parish, in which the whole number of Roman Catholic children is under twenty. In Larne, where I reside, in the principal male and female National Schools, the proportion of Roman Catholic children in each school is nearly one-fourth, the remaining three fourths being chiefly Presbyterian children, with some of the Established Church, and some of other denominations: I have also visited other National Schools in this county, more distant than those before mentioned, and a few in some of the adjoining counties: and in no one school can I recollect an instance of a perfectly unmixed class of scholars, in regard of their religious faith; and I may add, from observation and correct information, that it will very generally be found in the counties of Antrim and Down, and also in other northern counties, that united education prevails under the National Board, and that, while in the two former counties, the greater proportion of children in at-



tendance at the National Schools in most places, may be Presbyterians; yet that, in these schools, and generally in the rural districts of the North of Ireland, the classification of children, as regards their religious faith, will be found in a very fair ratio with that of the surrounding population."

The town of Armagh he speaks of, as an exception to this rule. Here there is a very good school of a model kind, under the Church Education Society, which I visited. In this town, in particular, the children of the Church schools appear cleaner in their persons, better clothed than those of the National Schools, and this, in point of appearance and of clothing, might apply to other places; but the peculiar circumstances connected with Armagh are sufficient to account for this; but even here my impression was, that the acquirements of a school of this kind were not equal to those of the best National Schools. One of the National Schools was closed at that time, not having a master: another, a large one full of children, all Roman Catholics, was ill-ventilated, although in other respects doing well.

The school at Sligo appeared to me a very interesting one, but I had no opportunity of examining it. I had some conversation with the master in the school on the subjects taught, and the manner of teaching them. He was clearly well trained, and took great interest in his work. He had various specimens of

the rocks and minerals in the county and neighbourhood, and knew how to take advantage of local circumstances in order to interest his school. This it is in a teacher which ensures success, and it cannot be too much impressed upon our schoolmasters to talk to the children of the nature of the things about them—the animals, vegetables, minerals, and, in fact, to interest them in that part of the creation which is rubbing against them at every step: if a teacher knows well how to do this, the children will smooth all difficulties with the parents, and it gives a life and action to the whole, which nothing else will do.

As a school of an industrial kind, the design of the one just now built at the fishing-village of Cladagh, close to the town of Galway, is very interesting—the Piscatory National School. The building is a particularly neat one, and its intention is, by a good education bearing upon their own occupations, to open out more extensive fields of industry in nautical life to the rising generation in and about Cladagh, which, from prejudice, and from ignorance of more improved methods used in other fisheries, has hitherto been confined to their own sea-coast.

The day I spent in Galway was one of their annual fairs, and truly the Irish collect in great numbers on such occasions, but I am not aware of having seen one single instance of drunkenness during the day.

The opinion which I formed of the National Schools

which came under my observation, and which was sufficiently numerous to give a tolerably correct idea of the working of the whole, was, that in all those schools where the masters had been trained, there was a degree of school-acquirement displayed by the children in the knowledge of the subjects of their reading books, grammar, geography, Scripture history, arithmetic—and, in the larger schools, of the higher parts of arithmetic and mensuration, as applied to the business of life, far greater in amount than I had expected to find, and which showed that they were getting an efficient education, and one sufficient for all the wants of their class, and which had a strong hold on the feelings both of parents and of children, as was shown from the numbers which are to be found in every school.

The girls' schools did not appear to me in so satisfactory a state as the boys', chiefly from the want of needlework, giving an idea of a deficiency in this respect, but to which it will be difficult to find a remedy in the rural districts.

This success is no doubt owing to the steadiness of purpose with which the Board have pursued their plans from the beginning, and the business-like way in which they have worked them out ; and in no small degree has it contributed to their success, their having, in the commencement of their proceedings, put forth a set of educational books, embodying a system of

instruction of a definite kind ; and it has always been to me a matter of great surprise, that something of the same kind should not have been done by our own National Society long ago : the progress of education in England has been very much retarded by its not having done so.

The great numbers also, which, from their plans, the training department have been able to send out, has worked great and rapid improvement in the staple of the teachers.

The head of this department, being acquainted with the Inspectors' reports, with the merits of the school-masters under the Board, and whether trained or not, knows the age, habits, state of school, of each school-master, and whether (all things considered) there is sufficient of promise in him to make him worth training ; and if so, he is brought up to Dublin for the purpose, his school in the meantime being conducted by some one approved of by the inspector of his district. In this way the best or most promising ones are selected ; the Board having about 100 masters at the same time, to attend lectures, and undergo a system of training for six months, to which time it is limited for the teachers brought up from the country, in order to extend the advantages to the whole as rapidly as possible ; and it is found, that short as this time is, it effects a very great improvement on those who receive it ; and the reports of them afterwards are in general highly satisfactory.

The numbers so sent out last year were 260 for National Schools, of whom 173 were males and 87 females; and also 30 teachers, who support themselves, for schools not National, of whom six were males and 24 females: there is also a special class in the Training Schools, consisting of about 30, fifteen of each sex, who remain for two years; and a few training for agricultural schools.

The observations about training apply also to the female teachers.

To the question, has the system answered as one of mixed education? it will, I believe, generally be found that where the clergy of the Established Church are decidedly opposed to the National system, that the children of their own persuasion do not attend the National Schools in any great numbers, and that in those cases, owing to this opposition, it has not answered as a system of mixed education to the extent which is desirable, but that with all other Protestant denominations it has; and I scarcely found one person, among those with whom I ordinarily conversed, both in the lower and middle classes, who did not look upon the National system as one of the greatest blessings ever conferred upon Ireland.

That the system has a strong hold on the feelings and opinions of the great mass of the Irish population, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, there can I think be no doubt; and this is very strongly shown by

the fact, that the number of schools in Ulster (the province in which Protestants of that class in life for which the National Schools are intended, are principally to be found) is greater than in any other part of Ireland.

There is I believe a party among the Roman Catholics who are opposed to it ; but when it is seen that at the end of 1845 there were 3,426 schools in connexion with the Board, and attended by 432,844 children, being an average of upwards of 120 in each, and, in addition to this, the Board had at that time undertaken to make grants towards the building of 276 school-houses, which were then to be completed, and at which they expected an attendance of about 27,172 additional children, and there were then also five agricultural model schools in operation, and grants promised to five more : this bespeaks a great and general interest in the system.

The average annual increase of schools, from 1840 to the end of 1845, is 293, and of the yearly increase of children for the same time, 40,056.

The Board some years ago made a calculation, as appears by their returns, that, taking the children between the ages of seven and thirteen, they would require school room for 570,000. Considering the time it has been established ; the numbers at the end of 1845, as given above, are a very satisfactory and encouraging result.

In speaking of the numbers of schools and of children, the foregoing numbers include the workhouse schools, which the guardians have placed in connexion with the Board: the number of these at the end of 1845 was 90 out of 123, the whole number of unions in Ireland.

So great a number placing their schools under the superintendence of a Board of Education is a very strong fact; and in reference to it the Commissioners make the following observations in their Report:—  
 “That the Boards of Guardians of the different unions comprise Protestants and Roman Catholics, and have amongst them men of the highest rank and station: that the schools are attended by Protestants and Roman Catholics indiscriminately: and that the duty of giving religious instruction to those of each creed belongs to a chaplain of their own communion: that here, therefore, we see the National system carried into complete effect: that here we see how peculiarly adapted it is to the circumstances of Ireland: and that here, too, we see how decidedly it carries the opinion of the country with it.”

The number of children is so great in many of the Irish poor-houses, that the school department becomes one of the greatest importance. In many of those which I visited, such as Killarney, Listowel, &c. I found as many as 200 children, and in some, a much greater number.

In all, so far as the arrangements of the buildings are concerned, the school is well cared for—large and separate school-rooms, and extensive playgrounds for the boys and girls—children clean, and in this respect a great improvement upon their home habits ;—all getting some education and in many places good, and there is a wish to make that which is defective better—most of their schools furnished with maps, &c. The sites of the poor-houses seemed well chosen, generally in some elevated situation out of the town, and the organization and internal arrangement appeared better than in England ; so far as a traveller can form an opinion from having visited a considerable number, seen over the internal arrangements, examined their schools, seen the people at their meals, and made all the inquiry which it was in his power to do, I should say, that the system worked extremely well, and did credit to those concerned in the administration of it ; and I believe it is found, that the workhouses are doing their part well under the present circumstances and difficulties in which Ireland is placed.

Of the schools under the Church Education Society, I visited a good many, and it appeared to me, with a very few exceptions, judging from the books, from the kind of instruction given, and the numbers present, that they did not aim at that amount of secular instruction which is to be found in the National Schools ;



and that, in this respect, as places of education, they were far inferior to them ; that continued opposition on the part of the clergy, must in all places, with the exception of a very few, such as Armagh and Dublin, have the effect of placing the children of the Established Church in a much worse position, in point of education, than those of any other denomination.

If the education at the Church schools is not equal to the wants of the present time, the parents will, no doubt, and I believe are now doing so on these very grounds, send their children to the National Schools, which offer greater educational advantages. In the last Report of the Church Education Society, the numbers at the end of December, 1844, were 104,968, and at the end of 1845, were 100,755, showing a decrease of 4,213. To maintain anything like an efficient system, even for children belonging to the Church, on a voluntary principle, must be difficult under any circumstances, and in opposition to a Board like the National one, a thing impossible ; and under these circumstances, it is deeply to be regretted, that so many of the clergy should feel themselves obliged to oppose the National system.

Education in Ireland has, as respects the practical good which is to arise from it, greater difficulties to contend with than in England : not greater as to giving the people a certain amount of intellectual education, or of knowledge bearing upon the arts of

industrial life—for the Irish are in all these respects a most teachable people—but the greater difficulty is, in finding a field for productive labour when they leave school.

That education, which teaches them greater skill in what are likely to be their after employments—greater steadiness and fixity of purpose in what they undertake, producing also a disposition to habits of industry and good order, will have the effect of bringing about increased confidence in those who have it in their power to give employment there can be no doubt ; and will thus, in the end, it is to be hoped, open out new fields of home-employment of a productive kind in a system of improved agriculture—of a more extended commerce — increased employment in their fisheries, their mines, and other resources belonging to Ireland, which hitherto have, comparatively speaking, been but little thought of.

As a proof of what may be done in this way, even by an individual, a most striking instance is given in ‘Facts from Gueedore,’ just now published, by Lord George Hill : let any one read the petition of Patrick McKye, the master of the National School, to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in 1837, and then read the list of things sold at Lord George Hill’s store, and that in articles there mentioned, *the very same people* to whom the petition applies, laid out £550 in the *quarter*, ending the 19th of December, 1844 ; and

that they delivered at the store, and sold that *same year* oats to the amount of £1,100;\* and it must convince him, that the people of Ireland may yet do much for themselves, if they would only set about it in the right way; an experiment so full of instruction at this present time, is most cheering, and must be gratifying to every one to see. Patrick McKye's petition is worth reading for its graphic description of things about him.

The most useful lesson which can be taught the Irish labourer, and one which ought to be instilled into him in youth, is, that a system of working for wages would place him in a state of much greater comfort than the occupation of a small patch of land is ever likely to do, and create in him feelings of a different kind from those he has at present, giving a taste for a better dwelling, better clothes, and better food; and make him feel that there is a kind of happiness and comfort within his reach, far above that in which he is at present dragging on his threescore years and ten, vegetating upon what has been termed the lazy root of Ireland, and in a state of existence, such as is scarcely to be found in any other civilized part of the world.

I know of nothing that gives a stranger a clearer insight into the state of the small holders of land in

\* Previous to this, they were never in the habit of selling their grain, but made it, and all they could procure besides, into poteen. 'Facts from Gueedore' also mention, that in 1845, upwards of three hundred pounds' worth of exciseable articles were sold at the store; a proof, that improvements in Ireland, are not *necessarily* unproductive to the Exchequer.

Ireland, occupiers of from two, up to ten or perhaps twenty acres, than in looking on at one of their markets, particularly if immediately after harvest. I happened to be at Gort, a small town in the county of Clare, on their weekly market-day at the end of August; the number of people, some having one pig—two perhaps—another, one, two, three sheep; some with a small quantity of grain, oats, barley, or wheat; but in no case more than about a sack, and in many instances beat out by whipping the sheaf over a stone, leaving the straw to get a sort of threshing at a more convenient time; this small quantity in most cases, being their whole produce of that kind; then the women with a few fowls, perhaps a turkey or two, a few eggs, showing clearly, that no part whatever of the produce beyond the potatoes and buttermilk, went for their own support.

It is rather curious to contemplate how little the discoveries and inventions of modern times, and the progress of things supposed to have an influence on the comforts and happiness of mankind, have done for the Irish peasant.

Beginning with his cabin, to what period of time must we go back to contemplate a state of things more rude, or requiring less of art to construct than it does, or having fewer of those things which man in the progress of civilization has adopted in his dwelling, than we find here.

Then, again, in England we speak of the produce of

our colonies, sugar and coffee from the West, tea from the East, reaching our cottages ; but how few of these ever reach the Irish cabin ; with the exception of tobacco, that bane of Irish peasant life, few or none of these things find their way there ; and hope, that sweetener of life, has hitherto never opened a prospect to him of a more cheering kind, than that of vegetating upon the produce of his potato land, and bringing up his children to tread in the same steps.

Still with all this I have never travelled among a peasantry who were more cheerful, more obliging, or more alive to kindness than they are.

To my mind no feature in Ireland offers so cheering a prospect for the future as her National Schools. May all classes unite in promoting a system of education already so well commenced, and so likely to be productive of lasting good. May they all endeavour to realize the words of their countryman, Professor Kane, that “ with temperate habits, and with the education which the National system will give to every individual of the growing race, there is no danger but that industry may be accompanied by intelligence, intelligence by morality, and all by the steadiness of purpose and tranquillity of habits, on which the happiness of the family, and the peace of the community depend.” This is the result which it should be the object of all to promote.

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